



# IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Two Elderly Women Die from West Nile Infection**

A Twin Falls County woman in her 80's and a Lincoln County woman in her 60's have died from complications of West Nile infection. This is the second reported West Nile related death of a Lincoln County resident and the first of a Twin Falls County resident. The deaths bring to 14 the total number of Idahoans reported to die from illnesses associated with West Nile virus in 2006. All of the Idaho resident deaths reported have been in people over the age of 60.

As of Friday, 805 Idaho residents have tested positive for West Nile virus across southern and central Idaho this year. Symptoms of West Nile infection include headaches, body aches, fever and sometimes a rash. More serious infections have also been reported including encephalitis, meningitis, and other nervous system disorders. People are advised to call their healthcare provider if symptoms interfere with their daily routine, or are symptoms they would normally call their doctor about.

West Nile virus is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes; it does not spread by person-to-person contact or from animals to people. Because mosquitoes are the main form of transmission, people are advised to 'Fight the Bite' of mosquitoes and:

- Insect-proof their homes by repairing or replacing screens;
- Reduce standing water on their property that provides mosquito breeding habitat, such as bird baths and decorative ponds;
- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors;
- Apply insect repellent approved by the EPA to exposed skin and clothing. Follow instructions on the product label, especially for children;

- Avoid mosquitoes when they are most active at dawn and dusk; and
- Report dead birds and squirrels to your local Fish and Game office.

Additional information about the virus is available from the Department of Health and Welfare's web site at <http://www.westnile.idaho.gov>, which is updated regularly. The Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Urban Pest Management program also has information available on steps to prevent home-grown mosquito infestations. This information is available on ISDA's web site at <http://www.idahoag.us>.

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**(Editors: For more information, please contact Ross Mason at 334-0693, or your District Health Department Public Information Officer.)**